

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 /026 W

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PR 101010 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SANAA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1855

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY TELAVIV

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY ROME

USUN NEW YORK 024

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

SECRET SANAA 374

EXDIS

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, YE, ET, IS

SUBJECT: ALLEGED ISRAELI OCCUPATION OF ZUQAR ISLAND

RDF: ADDIS ABABA 2650 (NOTAL)

1. ACCORDING DEPUTY PRIMIN/ FONMIN NU' MAN,
ETHIOPIAN AMBASSADOR FITAWRARI SIRAGE CALLED ON
HIM MARCH 9 TO CONVEY IEG' S UNQUALIFIED ASSURANCE
THAT NO ISRAELI INSTALLATION EXISTS ON ZUQAR ISLAND.
THEREFORE, YARG RECONNAISSANCE OF THIS ETHIOPIAN
ISLAND WOULD NOT BE NECESSARY. NU' MAN REPLIED THAT
IT REMAINS YARG'S INTENTION SATISFY ITSELF THAT THERE
NO ISRAELI PRESENCE ON ISLAND. HE CONTESTED IEG' S
POSITION THAT ZUQAR IS ETHIOPIAN TERRITORY, POINTED
OUT PROXIMITY TO YEMENI SHORE, HISTORICAL LINKS OF
ZUQAR WITH YEMEN, ETC. HE SAID IT RIDICULOUS FOR

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TWO STATES WITH SUCH IDENTITY OF INTERESTS AS ETHIOPIA AND YEMEN ALLOW UNRESOLVED STATUS OF A HANDFUL OF ESSENTIALLY UNINHABITED ISLANDS DISTURB THEIR RELATIONSHIP. IT HIGH TIME FOR IEG AND YARG BEGIN FRIENDLY, QUIET NEGOTIATION TO RESOLVE QUESTIONS OF SOVEREIGNTY ONCE AND FOR ALL. THIS WAS SPIRIT OF YARG'S APPROACH TO PROBLEM.

2. CONFIDENTIALLY, FONMIN ASSURES US YARG INTENDS HOLD UP ITS SIDE OF ARGUMENT ON QUESTION OF ZUQAR SOVEREIGNTY IN AMICABLE DISCUSSION WITH IEG, BUT HAS NO INTENTION OF CREATING ANY SORT OF INCIDENT. YARG RECONNAISSANCE OF ZUQAR, OF WHICH FONMIN HAD SPOKEN TO US EARLIER (SANA 343), LIKELY CONSIST OF SAIL PAST ISLAND BY FISHING VESSEL TO SEE IF THERE ANY SIGN OF UNUSUAL ACTIVITY.

3. COMMENT: OBJECT OF THIS EXERCISE IN TERMS OF USG INTEREST WOULD SEEM TO HAVE BEEN ESSENTIALLY ACHIEVED: TWO FRIENDLY GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN FORE-WARNED OF A POSSIBLE STORY WHICH, ALTHOUGH (AS WE HAVE CAUTIONED YARG FROM OUTSET) IN ALL PROBABILITY ENTIRELY WITHOUT FOUNDATION, WOULD HAVE CAUSED EMBARRASSMENT AND TENSION HAD IT TAKEN THEM BY SURPRISE. WHILE NOT IN AGREEMENT ON SOVEREIGNTY OF ZUQAR AND OTHER ISLANDS, THEY ARE IN FRIENDLY CONTACT WITH ONE ANOTHER TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO THEIR RELATIONS. USG HAS DISARMED SUSPICION WHICH WOULD HAVE BEEN INEVITABLE IN YEMENI MINDS THAT IT LINKED TO OR AWARE OF ALLEGED ISRAELI ACTIVITY, THUS PROTECTING OUR OWN RELATIONS.

CRAWFORD

NOTE BY OC/ T: NOT PASSED CAIRO

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